

Yuri V. Andropov
President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
Staraya Ploshchad, 4
Moscow

September 5, 1983

Dear President Andropov,

As you are aware from our previous letters, we in the Fast For Life have now gone without nourishment for over one month as we await -- with the rest of humanity -- a significant break in the momentum of the nuclear arms buildup.

We have chosen to undertake our open-ended fast at this particular time because we have long perceived Fall 1983 to be a moment of crisis in the nuclear era. If both the United States and the Soviet Union proceed to carry out weapons production of new counterforce weapons such as the MX and the SSX-24, the deployment of Pershing II and long-range cruise missiles and the Soviet responses to this deployment -- the arms race is likely to become not only more dangerous but near-irreversible.

Our fast is timed to dramatize this fact: that if the armaments process continues unchecked even another month, it is not only the lives of us fasters that will be put at sharply greater risk, but the life of everyone on earth. At the same time, we perceive opportunities on each side for actions that can brake and halt the onward rush of new, ever more dangerous weapons and deployments.

We now make two specific proposals [attached] to this effect. They are not, of course, meant to exclude, but rather to suggest still other possibilities. (We are addressing corresponding proposals simultaneously to NATO Governments).

Many tell us that it is unrealistic to imagine that governments could reach decisions of such importance in the time frame we are discussing here. Yet we believe that boldness in initiatives this forceful is required precisely in this time frame to protect the security of your own country and of all others. We who sign this letter have staked our lives that what is humanly necessary can be made possible.

Yours for peace,

signed.

PROPOSAL ONE

We note your announced willingness to reduce markedly the level of SS-20 IRBM's within range of West Europe, and to liquidate those withdrawn, if NATO foregoes the deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles. We also recall your earlier expression of willingness to consider warheads, as well as missiles, in the reductions. If the total number of SS-20 warheads liquidated should be close to the number of new warheads that we in the peace movement call on NATO to forego -- 572 -- we believe that no new deployments to Europe would take place. Again, it is in your power both to specify this concretely now and to underscore this willingness by a dramatic action-initiative which can be highly influential in breaking through the current political stalemate. This is our first proposal:

We urge you to commence immediately the visible dismantling and destruction (perhaps in the presence of invited international observers!) of an SS-20 missile now stationed in range of West Europe, and to continue such dismantling on a steady fixed schedule -- say, an average of one missile per week till the end of this year, i.e. through December.

The destruction of some 12-14 missiles by the end of December could not prejudice Soviet security in any way. No doubt, those who favor NATO deployments would try to deprecate the significance of this independent Soviet initiative, as they have done with other Soviet moratoria and commitments. But the outcome of negotiations does not rest solely, or even mainly, with them, nor with the representatives of the U.S. Executive branch in Geneva. There are many other participants in the decision process in NATO countries, and we are suggesting that you address them directly, in the language of dramatic action.

Immediate destruction of currently deployed missiles would be a striking demonstration of Soviet leadership and self-confidence in acting to defuse the present crisis. It would evoke a powerful response from great public movements in Europe and the U.S. that simply did not exist a few years ago. They in turn have power to shape decisions in European parties and parliaments and the U.S. Congress, not only to mandate delay in NATO deployments but ultimately to reject them.

PROPOSAL TWO

We propose that you transform the overall arms competition by acting to suspend the qualitative nuclear arms race immediately, without further time-consuming negotiations:

We ask you to suspend immediately all Soviet testing of nuclear warheads and all flight-testing of new ballistic missiles for two months, to be extended for two years unless the United States tests warheads or new ballistic missiles after the first two months of your suspension of testing.* New ballistic missiles would include not only new ICBM's (as defined in SALT) such as the MX and SSX-24, but MRBM's and IRBM's, such as Pershing II and SS-21, 22, and 23, as well as new SLBM's on both sides.

It is widely recognized that the testing of warheads and all such ballistic missiles can now be adequately verified by national means alone. Thus no further negotiations over new means of verification are required in order for each side to assure itself that the other is not testing. This would apply not only to the testing of warheads and ballistic missiles, but also to the testing of anti-satellite weapons and the deployment of land-based ballistic and ground-launched cruise missiles. It would be more than desirable to include these activities, too, in the mutual suspension we are asking you to initiate (as you have already undertaken in the case of anti-satellite weapons).

New means of verification, perhaps cooperative ones, may be desirable for still higher assurance of a permanent halt to testing. Still further means may be necessary to monitor a more comprehensive mutual freeze, including testing of cruise missiles and production and deployment of all nuclear materials, warheads and vehicles, and to monitor reductions in stockpiles. But these new means of verification can best be negotiated in the context of a mutual halt at the onset of such negotiations to all the activities that can already be adequately monitored by national means, which comprise the major part of the arms race.

In principle this could be accomplished in the time of a phone call between Soviet and U.S. Heads of State conveying the understanding on both sides: "No such testing or new deployments by us for at least two years, so long as none by you."

* The initial period of two months is chosen arbitrarily, to allow time for the United States Government to respond to your initiative. You may wish to specify a different interval. Likewise, the commitment to an extended "negotiators' pause" could be made longer or somewhat shorter, although it should be long enough for negotiations to show progress. Of course, it could be extended, even indefinitely, by mutual agreement.

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